

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 1, 2 and 11 as follows. For convenience, all pending claims are included.

- B2*  
1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:

a handle member comprising a body portion defining an opening therethrough, the opening configured to receive fingers of a human hand therethrough, the handle member configured to be grasped by said fingers;

a cantilever portion having a base end and a free end, the base end coupled to the handle member defining a slot between the free end and the handle member, the slot being configured to receive at least one handle of at least one bag; and

a hook extending into the slot between the free end and the handle member, the hook configured to block at least a portion of the slot, wherein at least a portion of the slot defines a well, and wherein the hook is angled inwardly toward the well.

2. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein ~~at least a portion of the slot defines a well, and wherein~~ the hook has a sharp edge facing the well.

3. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the slot defines a well, and wherein the hook has a rounded edge facing the well.

4. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the handle member, the cantilever portion, and the hook comprise an integral body.

5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the hook has a first position blocking the slot and a second position providing access to the slot.

6. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 1 further comprising a supplemental handle portion connected to the handle member, the supplemental handle member comprising a giving material.

7. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the hook is attached to the cantilever portion.

8. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the opening has a generally pentagonal shape.

9. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the handle member and the cantilever portion are of a uniform thickness.

*b2* 10. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the hook has an edge generally conforming to the shape of a well defined by the slot.

11. (Currently Amended) A method for carrying bags comprising:

providing an apparatus comprising a handle member and a cantilever portion, the handle member defining an opening therein and a slot between the handle member and the cantilever portion, the apparatus further comprising a hook attached to the cantilever portion;

grasping the handle member through the opening;

inserting at least one handle of at least one bag over the cantilever portion and through a space defined by the hook extending into the slot such that the at least one handle is disposed in a well defined by the slot, wherein the hook is angled inwardly toward the well; and

carrying the at least one bag having said at least one handle disposed in said well by holding the handle member.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 11, wherein the hook substantially prevents the at least one handle disposed in the well from sliding off the at least one cantilever portion.

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Please add the following new claim:

*b3* 13. (New) The apparatus of Claim 1 further comprising:

a second cantilever portion having a base end and a free end, the base end coupled to the handle member defining a slot between the free end and the handle member, the slot being configured to receive at least one handle of at least one bag; and

a hook extending into the slot between the free end of the second cantilever portion and the handle member, the hook configured to block at least a portion of the slot, wherein at least a portion of the slot defines a well, and wherein the hook is angled inwardly toward the well.